1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[P. 169-A]

302 barks. The preparation of the dyes and the
386 painting of the geometric designs are a woman's
[462] art.

Care of Body

• 515 Schebesta says that bodily care is very much neglected among the Mbuti. He agrees with and quotes Stuhlmann (1894) who writes that the Pygmies are exceptionally dirty and are afraid of water. Schebesta also mentions the fondness of the Mbuti for rubbing oil into the skin.

DOMESTIC ANIMALS

231
[439] The hunting dog (Efe: *ebó*) is the sole domestic animal. Schebesta says that all Mbuti maintain hunting dogs, bought from villagers or
[534] acquired by trade. These dogs are mute; hence the need for dog bells, made by the Pygmies themselves and hung around the dog's neck (Fig. 7i).

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.201-A]

Care of Body

515 302 [184] According to the Putnams, the net hunters take much greater care of their bodies than Schebesta's archers. They bathe frequently in the shallow streams near the camp, inspect each other carefully for bugs and lice (acquired inevitably when sleeping on the ground), and shave their heads for purposes of cleanliness rather than for esthetic satisfaction. Oil, when available, is rubbed into the skin. On ceremonial occasions, when they visit the Bantu village, palm oil is used, often mixed with *nkula* paste to add to its natural deep red color.

DOMESTIC ANIMALS

231 184 The only domestic animal, as with the archers, is the hunting dog, but this, although highly prized, is not so important to the net hunter as to the archer and tracker. Even among the larger net-hunting bands there may be only one or two dogs.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P 212-C] DAILY LIFE

The food quest, as with the archers, is the primary concern of daily life among the net hunters. The net-hunt is considerably more rewarding than the other form of hunt, although it probably occupies as much time. Care and maintenance of the nets are also laborious and time-consuming. Women gather not only as they accompany the hunt, but also on those days when the hunt stays behind in the camp. The children make a not inconsiderable contribution to the family food quest. A common occupation on a non-hunting day is for men and women to assist each other in the making of twine from *nkusa* vine. This twine is used primarily in the repair of hunting nets.

As with the archers, elimination takes place not far from the camp. Refuse is never carried away; it is merely thrown behind the huts. These practices not merely create an unpleasant smell after some weeks, but also attract armies of ants. The Mbuti themselves, however, keep their bodies scrupulously clean, and the favorite recreation of the children is playing about in the shallow streams. The men assert that they can all swim but are never seen doing so; they are certainly much afraid of deep water.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

are contradicted every day without necessarily causing any mention, but in the event of anything more serious happening later, the earlier incidents will be recalled and made into an issue that successfully embroils, ultimately, the entire camp.

But more curious than this slight emphasis on normal, or mildly abnormal and trivial patterns is the lack of emphasis at times where one would have thought the occasion to be of major concern to the band. Birth and marriage, for instance, provoke little comment, and concern primarily the nuclear families and not the band. The relationship between these particular attitudes and the nonlineal and fluid composition of the band is plain. The constant movement of families from one band to another, alone, opens up different and important avenues for recruitment that has the advantage of being selective.

With this in mind, let us look first at the daily life of the Mbuti, briefly, for it is of little structural significance, then at the life cycle.

Among both net-hunters and archers five days out of seven are likely to include some hunting. Even though it would be possible for the Mbuti to kill a surplus of game and dry the meat and store it for their own future use, as indeed they do for the benefit of the villagers, such measures are no more to their taste than to their advantage. On a hunting day the family rises at dawn, the mother and her older daughters who are at the age of puberty go to the stream to wash themselves and bring back water for drinking and cooking. The menfolk go to a different part of the stream, and generally slightly later. The older men might be excessively lazy and use the water brought back for drinking as bath water.

While the women cook the light morning meal and set food aside for taking with them on the hunt, the men shake out and inspect their nets, bows and arrows, their sons helping them or simply looking on. If the forest is dry, the hunt may start leaving within an hour of dawn, otherwise it may not leave until midday. Usually it sets off about two hours after sunrise and may return anytime between midday and dusk. There is no particular order for leaving the camp, but the youths usually go ahead, and not far away they light a fire at the base of a small tree, as an invocation to the forest for a good hunt. Men and women alike stop by the fire on their way, but with no ceremony. It does serve, however, as a place for a more cordial exchange of greetings than generally takes place in the still sleepy camp.

Back in the camp some old grandparents, or maybe only a handful

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

have intercourse with her, he must then stay in the *elima* hut until the end of the festival, and he will be considered as her betrothed. There is no doubt that the girls are, like their mothers, anxious to find suitable lovers who may become their betrothed, and it would indeed only be a particularly flirtatious girl who did not hope that her *elima* would end in betrothal. During the first weeks the girls have ample opportunity for experimentation, and it may be assumed that such experimentation began even before the festival began. But in the last two weeks they are looking for a future husband, and they take great pains to paint their bodies and make themselves beautiful for their evening appearances outside the *elima* hut.

These occasions are formal presentations of the girls as adults. For the first time they sing the *elima* songs and dance before the entire band, and for the first time the youths who are considered as suitable candidates sit together and join in the singing with the girls. Each youth will try to catch the attention of the girl of his choice, and each girl will try to respond, but the occasion is a serious one, and the mothers, who sit with the girls and separate them from the youths, sharply reprove anyone who is caught flirting. When the singing is over, the girls are shepherded back into their hut, and unless they come out in an attack with their whips, no boy may enter.

The length of the festival is anything from one to two months, and it ends without regard to the successful betrothal or otherwise of the *elima* girls. The girls are taken to a nearby stream in the early hours of one morning, and wash themselves carefully a number of times. I have heard them refer to this as "washing the blood," but this is also a village expression for the ritual purification of a menstruating woman, and it is impossible to be sure of the exact significance of the term for the Mbuti until more material is available. The washing, however, is unlike that of village ritual washing, being completely informal, the *elima* girls washing together with all the others, eating and drinking in between sessions of swimming and splashing and playing in the water. When it is over they return to the camp, rub their bodies with oil, sing and dance in public as much or as little as they like and without adult supervision. They continue to stay together throughout the day as a group, but in the evening they disperse to their individual homesteads. For the next few days this is repeated, without the washing, and then the camp returns to normal.

If a betrothal has been effected, the boy will wait for a suitable opportunity, then make the proper approach to the girl's parents, asking

THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

a tangle of fallen trees and ever-spreading vines and creepers. Here and there where the *fito*—the sapling used by villagers for building their houses—had once grown, the tangle was even worse. Once the forest is cut it grows up again, not as the mighty primeval forest it was, but as a jungle of secondary vegetation that in places is almost impenetrable. We went in single file, for the most part following a path; when we left it the youths in front flashed their hatchets above their heads, slashing away overhanging branches and vines without even slowing up, to make it easier for us to follow. But where they cut they left sharp jagged ends sticking out at just about eye-level for me. When newly cut these dangerous points are plainly visible and easy to avoid, but when they become old and dirty they are a real menace.

After about half an hour we reached the place where the more ambitious Pygmies had tried to make a plantation; this was the farthest point from the new village of Epulu that the Negroes had reached when searching for the wood to build their houses. Beyond this they did not care to venture, except for an occasional one such as Kaweki, who made his living by trapping fish in the forest streams, and those who came to help him or to carry his fish to the market. Beyond this point, in Negro eyes, the forest was evil—full of animals, malevolent spirits, and Pygmies.

But for the people of the forest the world began at this point. There was a stream nearby, just beyond the "plantation," near a site where I had recorded the forest songs of these same Pygmies * three years earlier. In this stream, for no obvious reason, each of the five youths washed carefully, as though literally ridding their very feet of the dust of the village. Then they splashed through the cool, clear water and set off again with even greater vigor than before,

* Folkways Records: FE 4457, Pygmies of the Ituri Forest
FE 4483, Music of the Ituri Forest

night, when it is cold, the fire gives not only warmth but protection, keeping the animals away.

It was midday when we waded through a marshy patch left by recent floods. Usually there is little marsh or swamp, but every now and again dead branches and fallen trees will block a stream and the whole area will be flooded, perhaps for miles, until a heavy rain washes the obstruction away. We had to splash knee-deep through mud and water for several hundred yards before we reached dry land. The first thing Kenge and the others did then was to find the main stream and wash themselves clean before going any farther.

From here the ground rose steadily and although we could hear streams below us we did not cross any more until just before we got to the Lelo. Up on the ridge the forest was a little thinner, more light filtered through to the ground below, and the world was alive with dancing shadows as the breeze rippled the leaves. But the sun still raised the temperature only to the point where it was pleasantly warm. As we were picking our way down into the Lelo valley we heard distant rumbles of thunder. Kenge stopped and looked up into the tree tops to see which way the wind was blowing. He muttered that it would not rain yet, but if those lazy women didn't hurry up and come and build the huts we would have a very wet night.

But for the moment the sun was shining, and when we finally arrived at the site for our camp it was bright and green and cheerful. It was a natural clearing a couple of hundred yards across, with a patch of trees and bush in the center breaking up the clearing so that it was really two. As large and as open as it was, the trees still almost met overhead. The ground, instead of being covered with leaves, was covered with a kind of grass. Kenge dumped his bundle on top of a little hillock several yards across and said that this was where we would have our house built. He then told me to come and see the Lelo itself, hinting that I should have a good bath.

Apa Lelo, or the Camp of Lelo, will always be one of the most

THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

In the middle
of the day the sun found its way through the leaves and struck this bank, and the women liked to wade out to it and do their washing there. When the river was as low as this you could wade all the way across, if you knew where to step, but at other times a huge fallen tree was used as a bridge.

On the far side the ground rose sharply, and though at first the forest was still open and friendly, as soon as you reached the top of the rise it became thick and closed in around you, and the only paths were those made by animals, narrow and twisting.

Kenge showed me all this with his chest puffed up with pride. He told me I could drink water from any of the streams or from the Lelo itself; it was not like living in the village where both the food and water were dirty. He showed where the women would bathe, and warned me to keep upstream of the shingle bar, so as not to offend them. The other youths had already stripped naked and were splashing in the water, unashamed, though in deference to an overclad Westerner they held their hands in front of them when they turned to face me.

We went back to the campsite and Kenge started clearing the ground. Very shortly afterward three of the great hunters arrived— Njobo, the killer of elephants; Masisi, the proud father; and Manyalibo, the gruff, good-humored conservative. They shouted a greeting as they came into the clearing, and looking around they threw down their hunting nets where they thought they would like to have their houses built. Njobo chose to be just to the south of the hillock; Manyalibo and Masisi, good cousins that they were, put their nets down beside each other, opposite. Then almost immediately they disappeared into the forest, each in a different direction, each with bow and arrows. In less than fifteen minutes Kenge, who had been examining the tracks of a huge buffalo that had passed by the night before, suddenly stood still and motioned me to be quiet. With his hands he mimed an antelope running and pointed into the forest behind Manyalibo's chosen site.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

the same way, the frame resting on four forked sticks, but we were the only household to bother with a table. The others would build them later, Kenge said, when the hunting brought in so much meat that they could spare some to dry for the villagers. Then they would build tables higher than ours, and light fires under them.

Chairs were even simpler to make. Kenge cut four sticks, each about three and a half feet long, and twisted a vine thong around the middle of the bundle. He stood them on the ground, and with a turn of his hand he splayed out the ends and had a comfortable seat. When you get used to this kind of chair you can even go to sleep, resting your back along one stick and hooking your feet over the opposite one. Pygmies, in the forest, are clean people, and they do not like sitting on the ground. Either they make these simple chairs or they sit on logs, often on the end of a log that is sticking out of a fire. If the worst comes to the worst they will pull a leaf from the roof of the nearest hut and sit daintily on that.

During the day more families arrived, and while they were busy building their huts, those who had arrived the day before put the finishing touches to theirs. Sometimes someone would apparently have a grudge against a neighbor, or a dislike for someone who had built a hut opposite. I saw several women turning the entrances of their huts to point in different directions, toward friends or relatives. During the course of any one camp women are continually adding to their huts or changing the way they face. I found that a good way of keeping track of the little jealousies that exist in any small community was to make a daily plan of the camp, noting which huts were being altered to face in which direction. I noticed that Arobanai, Ekianga's senior wife, faced her hut very deliberately away from old Sau, and that nobody was anxious to make use of the space between Sau's hut and mine to build there.

On the third day Ekianga arrived with Kamaikan, and they in-

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

it was wide and strangely smooth, but flowing in spate with all the majesty and power of a river twice the size. Kenge said we would wait for the others there, so as not to shame them in front of Kaweki by arriving first. He went to the water and washed himself. He disapproved of my refusal to do the same, but I was too tired even to sit down. I just propped myself up against a tree and waited. It was not much more than fifteen or twenty minutes later when Kelemoke and Hari came into sight, the one trotting quietly behind the other, apparently as fresh as when they had set out. They feigned surprise at seeing us, and said they had stopped to hunt on the way and had thought we would be in the camp by now. Kenge retorted that he was sorry they had caught nothing—we had been waiting two hours, maybe three or four, in case they were lost. We moved on, and in a few minutes, by-passing the falls, we came once more to the banks of the Itoro, and into Kaweki's camp.

It was a mixture of Negro village and Pygmy camp. The clearing was only some twenty yards across; on one side was Kaweki's house, built in the rectangular shape of a typical village house, but with walls hung with leaves instead of packed with baked mud. At right angles to it was another hut, long and low, the eaves coming right down to the ground so that the entrance gaped in a great triangle. We dropped our bundles on the ground and went into Kaweki's hut, calling from outside that we had arrived. The hut was divided into two by a leaf screen, the outer half being a kitchen with a drying rack for the fish. The rack was full, and a fire underneath did double duty, cooking food and smoking the fish. On the far side of the screen Kaweki lay on a bed of fresh leaves. A young Pygmy girl knelt beside him, gently massaging his chest. She was Hari's sister. Hari greeted her, then went to Kaweki and, addressing him as "Father," asked him how he was. Kaweki was almost too weak to speak, but he took our hands in turn and apologized for not having been able to get up to greet us. He said, "My daughter will get you